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Backgrounder

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Politics by Other Means

The "Why" of Immigration to the United States

By Fredo Arias-King

Most serious attempts to study immigration to the United States acknowledge that the results of the present immigration policy were, in effect, an accident — the product of a miscalculation by the authors of the 1965 Immigration Reform Act.[1] Their disagreements tend to center on the *consequences* of immigration. However, despite the mounting evidence that these consequences may not be as positive as often argued, there has been a certain reluctance to limit immigration (or discuss the issue frankly), and even a campaign by several groups to maintain it as such or even increase it. Another paradox is that immigration continues to be popular with practically all the ideological and political elites of the United States. At the same time, however, there is perhaps no other issue that represents a larger divide between ordinary Americans (who largely oppose current immigration levels) and their political elites. This paper attempts to address this paradox through the prism of my discussions with about 50 United States legislators on the issue of immigration.

From March 1999 to January 2001, I served as an aide to the National Action Party (PAN) of Mexico, and (until July 2000) to the presidential campaign of Vicente Fox. It was largely Dr. Carlos Salazar and I who handled most of the campaign's relations with Washington, in 14 visits, meeting each time with several legislators and other officials and with Mexican migrants in the United States. After the electoral victory of July 2000, Dr. Salazar and I were sent to represent the PAN at both the Democratic and the Republican national conventions where we met a large number of U.S. legislators.

In all, I spoke with about 80 U.S. legislators, mostly federal but also some state. With about 50 of them, I held relatively lengthy talks where the topic of immigration (among others) was discussed. Henceforth, these legislators collectively will be referred to as "congressmen."

In these talks with the congressmen, this author encountered an unexpectedly large amount of sympathy for the proposal to extend amnesty to existing undocumented immigrants, and to even increase immigration from Mexico. Interestingly, several of them were proposing amnesty with us even before it became Fox's official policy (this was duly reported back to the campaign). Though I was not empowered to negotiate, only discuss, inevitably a staple in the conversational menu with these congressmen included immigration. This enthusiasm cut across party lines and across the "conservative-liberal" divide, though the underlying arguments by the congressmen seemed to vary.

Only five congressmen expressed an unequivocal concern (four of them politely) with immigration in general, and opposition to illegal immigration in particular. The rest who expressed concern about immigration touched on the issue in passing, but did not emphasize it, preferring to touch on other matters.

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The reasons the pro-immigration congressmen seemed to have for their enthusiasm can be segmented and explained through political science tools, but with an overall background in economic theory.

The traditional division between "conservatives" and "liberals," and then between Republicans and Democrats, is not a good way to explain this behavior. For the purposes of this article, I will divide the approximately 45 pro-immigration congressmen I spoke with into a two-by-two matrix: "Right" and "Left" with "étatists" (advocates of state or elite power) and "anti-étatists" (those that distrust and seek to limit state power). The matrix below, I believe, provides a rather rough but more appropriate framework for the limited task at hand.

Webster's dictionary defines the Left as "opposition to and a desire to alter the established order," and the Right as "opposition to change in the established …order." We can therefore state that these are the *goals*, whereas the *tools* used by these two camps can be found in the étatist and anti-étatist divide. Four groups result.

This survey is certainly not scientific. After all, it suffers from self-selection since I dealt mostly with congressmen that agreed to talk about things Mexican (though several others, especially in the party conventions, were more randomly presented). The meetings also occurred before the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Furthermore, the congressmen may have been attempting to ingratiate themselves with their Mexican guests and hosts with their pro-immigration rhetoric, as one American campaign advisor suggested. But the experience nonetheless provides a framework for a "first stab" at exploring why immigration policy is almost exclusively an elite-driven phenomenon despite its unpopularity with the general American citizenry.[2]

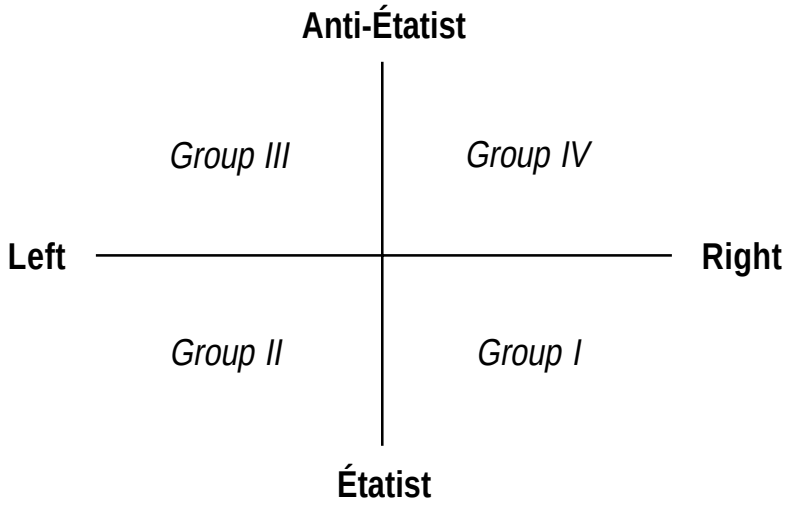
Economic Background

Part of the explanation for the U.S. demand for immigration can be found in economic theory. Specifically in economic failure/externalities, diffusion of responsibility, the free-rider problem, cost/benefit analysis, rational actor theory, incentives, collective action and the emerging "option theory."

The World Bank defines an externality as "costs or benefits resulting from an economic activity or transaction that accrue to persons or entities other than those engaged in it."[3]

Though the economic benefit of current immigration to U.S. *society* is still in dispute, few argue that there are tangible economic benefits accruing at least to certain, discernible groupings in society. Therefore, the externalities argument in economics can apply here — when the groups deriving the benefits of a particular activity do not bear the full costs of that activity, and therefore will pursue that activity even if the total costs are greater than the total benefits. The costs are spread evenly throughout society.

Companies and large farmers that lobby for immigrant labor also are responding to a rational economic stimulus. The immigrants provide revenue for the farmer and the companies. But in the scenario where the overall social costs of that immigrant exceed the revenues the immigrant produces for the farmer, it would not diminish the farmer's interest in importing the immigrant. The same with the churches, civil rights



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advocates, educators, and other groups that actively encourage immigration, since "someone else" pays for their benevolence whereas they reap the benefit, whether it be monetary or intangible.

This externalities problem in other areas traditionally is solved by collective action: forcing those deriving the benefits from a certain activity to pay for the full cost of that activity. Pollution is often an example of economic failure or an externality. Here, however, tangible groups found themselves adversely affected, compelling them to organize and correct the discrepancy. The pollution example easily turned into a "them" (the polluting "Big Business") versus "us" (the ecologically conscious common citizens). It was a battle between a perceived étatist Right (elitist Big Business and its government establishment patrons), versus an anti-étatist Left. Immigration on the other hand, is an economic failure that seems to adversely affect no particularly discernible or organizable group, only "society" as a whole. That is another reason collective action against the current immigration policy is difficult. As Mancur Olson's work on the logic of collective action points out, it is small groups with a great deal at stake that are more likely to be well-organized and active defenders of their own interests, whereas "imperceptible costs" immobilize the rest of society.[4]

Those who engage in externalities are rational individuals responding to a set of incentives, which allow them to derive benefits while someone else pays the costs. They may not even be aware, as individuals, why they are acting like that: much like individual investors cannot be held accountable for how the stock market behaves.

One of the five congressmen who expressed anti-amnesty views with us seemed to understand the externalities argument when he mentioned "granting citizenship to guest workers is as if I gave you this building [the U.S. Congress], since it does not belong to me."

Another economic argument to explain the lack of collective action is a simple cost/benefit analysis. The costs of maintaining the immigration system, even for those who do not benefit from it, are lower than the costs of challenging it or reforming it. Those that openly challenge America's current immigration policy can expect the wrath of those few who disproportionately benefit from it, and the apathy or lukewarm support of those who do not. The moral and social costs of being anti-immigration are higher than the costs of being pro-immigration or simply neutral. Most

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As with communism in Eastern Europe, the high cost of actively opposing immigration in the United States leads to what Polish intellectual Czeslaw Milosz called "Ketmanism," which is "acting out a series of public roles while masking one's private opinions: a constant and universal masquerade."[5] This Ketmanism applies not only to the political leaders we met, but also by and large to the American population, though in the opposite direction. The congressmen in private expressed positive views on immigration even though in public they vow to "get tough," while many Americans in private are more critical of immigration than they are in public.

Another economic argument that applies here is the emerging field of "option theory," which explains behavior in the options and other financial markets. Those who promote immigration to the United States give themselves the option, but not the obligation, to engage with these immigrants. They can choose to derive a benefit (monetary or intangible) from interacting with the immigrants. But they can choose not to exercise this option, in which case the immigrants and their consequences become "someone else's" responsibility. So immigration for these groups necessarily represents an "upside," without a discernible "downside."

Political Theory

As mentioned earlier, the approximately 45 pro-immigration congressmen can be segmented into four groups.

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Group I: Étatist Right

This group of congressmen opposed or feared change in the established order, and was sympathetic to the expansion of state power and elite stability.

Scholars and thinkers theorize that the goal of a political and bureaucratic class is permanence and power. The philosopher Max Weber wrote that the nature of bureaucracies is to survive and to expand, and that this is rational behavior.[6] The American Founding Fathers, who hailed from a liberal tradition, argued that the "natural progress" was for government to expand and liberty to recede. They understood that the interests of the ruling classes and of the common people may not always coincide. They therefore devised a Constitution and a Bill of Rights that divided the political class and sought to prevent a permanent elite in the United States.

Whereas James Madison relied on the institutional division of power to limit the inclinations of bureaucracy and tyranny, Thomas Jefferson's line of defense centered on the American individual, the "independent yeoman," the American frontiersman. Both were classic liberals, and perceived enemies of a conservative Right of the times. Partly due to them, the American culture has traditionally been hostile to the expansion of bureaucracies, to executive fiat, and to a permanent elite. The ideal Jeffersonian yeoman is not grateful to his masters, which makes permanent bonds of servitude difficult. He criticizes, questions, and even fires the politicians working for him. Jefferson even encouraged him to "irrigate the tree of liberty with the blood of tyrants." The American political and bureaucratic class as a rational "Weberian" actor must resent the Madisonian and Jeffersonian constraints placed upon it. For example, some congressmen of both parties spoke of the "need" to redistrict in order to ensure less contested elections and therefore more permanence and predictability for their careers. (This became policy later.)

Among several congressmen and other political operatives I encountered, a certain admiration for the long-ruling Mexican political class was discerned. Sometimes they would confuse us with members of the then long-ruling party (the Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI) and would talk at length about how they were "given the royal treatment" in the ranches and yachts and other perks of the Mexican political class. "Your leaders sure know how to live it up," exclaimed one congressman approvingly. Others would marvel at how the ruling party could govern for so long despite their abuse and without voter reaction. "If I did one-tenth of what they got away with, I'd be dead meat at election time," mentioned another one. Whereas there were indeed a handful of U.S. congressmen and other political actors that sympathized with the Fox campaign, several more appeared comfortable with the political status quo in Mexico. Presidential candidate George W. Bush, with a family history of personal friendship with PRI officials, went as far as tacitly endorsing the ruling party's candidate, despite repeated protests from the Fox campaign.[7] The daughter of the campaign manager of the Albert Gore campaign was working in the Mexico City campaign office of the ruling party's candidate, a former secret police chief with a record of alleged human rights abuses.

"They Make Ideal Constituents." At the same time, several congressmen mentioned how happy they were with their Hispanic constituents. The more usual compliments included: "They are grateful for whatever you give them;" "they never give me problems, I love going to their *barrio*;" "they are loyal;" "they are a gentle people;" and "they make ideal constituents." Referring to the mostly white population of his district, one congressman apologized for his "redneck" constituents who "don't understand" the importance of increased immigration. Another congressman spoke of the consequences immigration would eventually have for his competing party, in that it would "disappear, once and for all."

Unlike with the Jeffersonian yeoman, bureaucracies and police states fare better in Latin America (the source of most immigration to the United States). Many Latin Americans tend to fall prey to bonds of patronage and vertical relations and tend to question less the power or ill-gotten wealth of their politicians. They are perceived as admiring crude displays of authority and often applaud executive fiat. One Mexican intellectual wrote that the ruling party governed "with society's consent,"[8] whereas another called it "voluntary servitude."[9] A Mexican president opined that corruption is ingrained in Mexican culture.[10]

The cultural traits that explain the alleged relative failure of liberal democracy and economic prosperity in Latin America, plus the general sense of social

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Aristotle stated that tyrants seek to expand their power by tampering with their populations in three ways: making or keeping them ignorant; dividing them and encouraging conflict between them; and impoverishing them. Some studies claim that the current immigration policy is achieving these three objectives in the United States.

atomization and disorder, are discussed by such thinkers and scholars as the Nobel laureate Octavio Paz, Santiago Ramírez, Lawrence Harrison, and George Grayson. These cultural traits — such as level of susceptibility to demagogic or authoritarian appeals, view of others' property, relation to honesty and the law, dependence on hierarchies — affect country performance in ways that are only beginning to be explored and understood. For example, the U.S. Constitution was carbon-copied by virtually all the Latin American countries in the early 1800s, but did not work the same way. Eventually it gave way to strong executives and feudalism (*caudillismo*). Scholars are beginning to argue that perhaps culture determines institutions, and not the other way around.

Whereas Latin Americans are not easy to govern, they have proven easy to rule over. Robert Putnam, who studied the relative economic and political underdevelopment of southern Italy as compared to the north, wrote that in hierarchical and corrupt societies, "political participation is triggered by personal dependency or private greed, not by collective purpose."[11] He finds a "striking" parallel between the socio-political cultures of the Southern Italians and that of the Latin Americans.[12] With the increasing Latinization of the United States, the traditional horizontal, egalitarian, and civil-society relations could gradually be replaced with vertical, authoritarian, and patron-client relations. As one scholar said, "As the proportion of nonvirtuous citizens increases significantly, the ability of liberal societies to function successfully will progressively diminish."[13]

Eastern Europe is becoming a case study where the elites seem to benefit from the atomization and "de-vertebrizing" of their societies. One scholar called this the "Latvian Syndrome," where irresponsible and corrupt ("anti-social") policies by the political class create an overall feeling of frustration and distrust toward democratic institutions, resulting in authoritarian appeals becoming more attractive. It also results in withdrawal from active politics by the citizenry and apathy, which also lead to the entrenchment and "self-sufficiency" of the elites, and into a vicious circle. The scholar divides political society into "critics, cynics, and the corrupt," where "Critical citizens are crucial for improving the workings of democracy and to fight corruption, whereas cynical citizens willingly or unwillingly promote the weakness of democracy even more. In addition, corruption and the perception of pervasive corruption undermine democracy and citizen efficacy."[14] Changing the ratios of critical citizens vis-à-vis cynical citizens presumably would affect democratic governance in tangible ways.

This coincides with Montesquieu, who wrote that a republic depends on virtue more so than on written laws. John Adams seems to have concurred, mentioning that the U.S. Constitution was designed for a moral and religious people.

Over two millennia before them, Aristotle stated that tyrants seek to expand their power by tampering with their populations in three ways: making or keeping them ignorant; dividing them and encouraging conflict between them; and impoverishing them. Some studies claim that the current immigration policy is achieving these three objectives in the United States.

The American political and bureaucratic class that, in effect, has actively tolerated the immigration phenomenon perhaps sees this one as a way to free itself of the Madisonian constraints. Patronage, gratitude, servility, reciprocity, and acquiescence in corruption and under-performance will, in their minds, gradually replace the Jeffersonian yeoman. The increasing cultural diversity in the United States provides an element of *divida et impera* for the political class. The increased crime usually associated with immigration could lead the population to demand "action" from the political and police institutions, which then request and obtain additional resources and power from the state to "restore law and order."

In the perhaps unconscious view of this group of congressmen, immigration could lead to the *nomenklaturization* of the United States.

Group II: Étatist Left

This group of congressmen seeks to alter the established order by increasing the role of the state.

Because the diverse ethnic groups immigrating to the United States and their offspring perform differently under the present American system and free-market conditions, bridging the gap between these

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groups cannot be addressed by the existing free-market solutions. It is therefore up to those advocating state intervention, government programs, and the like to come up with the "solution" and the bureaucracies to carry it out. The more immigration, the more government programs and initiatives, the more jobs for those government-intervention activists wary of *laissez-faire*, and the more federal control. The city of Washington, D.C., under the Great Society programs of the 1960s could be an example. As was argued earlier, they do not bear the full cost of their actions, but they do fully reap the benefits of their social programs: contracts, grants, a mission and a chance to "make a difference."

Social Engineering. The American Left, as the Left everywhere, also has a penchant for social experimentation, even social engineering. Many leftist intellectuals and scholars often devise schemes and solutions to society's problems, with a certain contempt for traditional ways of life. Immigration is also favorably seen by them as a way of "redistributing the world's income" or "increasing understanding with other societies"[15] or "addressing previous injustices" or "creating better people," etc. Some of the arguments of this group of congressmen were not too different from the logic behind the *homo sovieticus*, the "new Soviet man" that the communists believed they were constructing in the 1920s and 30s. Some of these congressmen used adjectives such as "happier," "healthier," and "harder-working" to describe what their vision of the new American will be. They felt comfortable in the role of potential providers to needy groups in exchange for acquiescence in the expansion of government programs and power. They would talk to us about their plans to "guarantee health care" or "fund more services" or "give more scholarships" to the immigrants. One former U.S. cabinet member present in one of the party conventions mentioned approvingly, "What do Hispanics want? Fully-funded government programs!"

Citing the negative consequences of immigration to this group is likely to backfire, as the evidence that new waves of immigrants do not perform the same as previous waves is relative *good news* to them. Immigration is a source of power for the étatist Left not so much because immigrants tend to vote for the party most associated with them, but because the consequences of immigration from poor countries fundamentally reinforces their argument for state intervention.

Group III: Anti-Étatist Left

This group reflected a desire to alter the established order by limiting or weakening the ability of the state to function, or by modifying existing elites.

Healthy skepticism of government, police, and established elites is an American tradition. However, there seem to be two historical legacies that disproportionately influence how Americans relate to this issue and view the role of immigration in it. The first is the interaction between the "second wave" immigrants in the late 1800s and early 1900s with the existing majority of the time. The second is the perceived meaning and lesson of the Jewish Holocaust.

Many Americans of Irish, Jewish, Italian, Polish, and other "second-wave" immigration descent tend to sympathize with more recent waves of immigrants. Many of these "white ethnics" recall how their great-grandparents suffered discrimination by the "WASP" (white Anglo-Saxon Protestant) establishment of the time. They also feel certain pride that despite this, they and their descendants succeeded in the United States.

It seems that the WASPs were affected as well by that legacy. This group seems to feel embarrassed of their ancestors' behavior, as many of those groups that were not originally welcomed have indeed become successful and have largely integrated. In addition, this author has noticed a certain discrepancy between the private and public attitudes of these WASPs. While as common citizens they tend to be privately cool toward the idea of immigration, this changes when they feel the public light is shone on them (as when they become public officials). Then they become pro-immigration advocates and even deprecating toward their own kind. An example is the metaphor that ended George W. Bush's inauguration address, in that the sun was setting in west (traditionally white and higher-income) El Paso, whereas it was rising in the eastern (mostly Hispanic and poor) side.

Several congressmen in this group cited their "white ethnic" heritage to defend the right of Mexican

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One of them recalled a story from a paper he had read, stating that California had begun to have more non-white births than white births. Jubilantly, this (WASP) congressman raised his hand to offer me a "high five."

immigrants and to express sympathy to this author about their plight. Similarly, the apparent vestigial guilt of congressmen of WASP descent seemed to be a factor that restrained them from opposing such immigration. Other WASP congressmen were quite vocal in their support for the immigrants. One of them recalled a story from a paper he had read, stating that California had begun to have more non-white births than white births. Jubilantly, this (WASP) congressman raised his hand to offer me a "high five."

Perceived Lesson of the Holocaust. The second influencing factor that seems to play a disproportionate role with the anti-étatist Left group of congressmen is the perceived lesson of the Jewish Holocaust.

Civil liberties individuals and groups use the Holocaust and its lessons as their *raison d'être* and for their "Never Again" activism. Their work has revolutionized the oversight and control of the police and spy agencies such as the CIA and FBI, has paved the way for otherwise "outsider" and non-establishment groups in finding their way into politics, and strengthened privacy and equal-rights laws, in addition to other "anti-Big Brother" measures that have indeed altered, often radically, the established order in the United States.[16] They have also been active in the immigration debate.

Some scholars argue that Germany's highly homogenous population was a factor that, if not caused, then certainly enabled the Holocaust to take place. The paradox is that some of the most civilized and literate European nations at the time, in addition to Germany, actively supported Hitler's designs (Austria, Croatia, Northern Italy, Hungary, the Letts, and many Dutch), whereas "uncivilized," illiterate, and economically less developed peoples actively opposed fascism (Serbs, Russians, Bulgarians, gypsies). The unconscious link between the Holocaust and immigration is perhaps why the immigration issue often unexpectedly slips into a Jewish issue: "You reject them the way you once rejected those Jewish refugees during the Holocaust." [17] Those that question immigration are seen as necessarily unreasonable and potentially threatening to U.S. minorities.[18] Immigration-reform advocates are often labeled "Nazis."

The unconscious lesson from the Holocaust as it applies to immigration is that a dictatorship is harder to consolidate in a multi-ethnic society than it is in a homogenous one. America's white population, despite its many origins, seemed to have achieved relative homogeneity before the post-1965 immigration waves. In addition to diminishing and diluting a potentially hostile ethnic group, immigrants may retain residual loyalties to their country of origin, further hampering the possibility of a totalitarian consolidation. As with the étatist Left and the étatist Right, citing the alleged negative consequences of immigration to the anti-étatist Left is also largely ineffective, since the disarray these immigrants represent is a plus. The fact that many immigrants are illiterate, "undisciplined," and "uncivilized" strikes a positive chord.

Group IV: Anti-Étatist Right

This is the group of congressmen that seek to preserve the existing order in the United States and American traditions, and distrust state power.

This group believed they could help preserve American values through immigration. These include the tradition of an open door to outsiders, entrepreneurship, social mobility, morals, "fleeing tyranny," and family values.

Whereas the Right in other countries interprets conservatism as ethnic continuity, most of the American Right, paradoxically, does so by seeking to preserve the liberal values that founded the United States. However, most of the small number of congressmen that seemed to sincerely oppose immigration also come from this group and have a European concept of continuity (that is, ethnic and/or cultural).

Congressmen in this group mentioned that the immigrants "bring family values" that compensate for the perceived deterioration in the morality of Americans. Their preoccupation seemed to be a return to an America they feel is slipping away. This group, however, seems to be the only one of the four analyzed here that does not seek ethnic diversity as an end in itself, but rather sees it as a natural and even desirable byproduct of other goals.

This group is also associated with business, churches, and communities. They believe in the sanctity of the individual over the state, which includes the right to open borders and freedom of movement. They argue that immigration control is another way for the

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government to intervene in the private lives and the economic rights of the U.S. citizenry. Many in this group are also religious, and tend to follow the position on immigration of their churches, which tend to be supportive because of their corporatist interests. They also tend to be pro-business, and business lobbies tend to be pro-immigration. They also felt that immigrants prevent unions and other groupings from becoming too "entitled." In their business inclination, they seem to feel comfortable creating a free-market "soup," where businesses can pick and choose what they need and leave the rest. They sometimes spoke about the "need for workers" on a "temporary" basis. As mentioned earlier, by importing immigrants, this group can only gain but not lose — they have the option but not the obligation to pick and choose the building blocks (including labor) for whatever their venture. What they choose not to use somehow "goes away."

Discussion

This essay hopes to touch upon the paradox of the immigration issue in the United States by attempting to address why there is a disassociation between elite and popular opinion.

I very much doubt that the pro-immigration congressmen hatched a "conspiracy" in their tacit approval of the current immigration phenomenon. Their only sin is to respond rationally to stimuli, incentives, perceived opportunities, and coincidence in interests that enable these politicians to respond (or not respond) as a class, which is different from how their constituents would respond to the same issue. They would likely be surprised to find out they are probably in a majority. They are, however, aware that their interests in immigration do not coincide with that of their constituents. When I proposed to a pro-amnesty congressman putting that issue up for a popular referendum, he replied, "Are you crazy? It would never pass!"

This article also seeks to rebut a growing group of critics in the United States that place most of the blame on Mexico for the immigration deluge. Even some sympathizers believe this to be true, as one congressman told me "Let's make sure they keep on coming!" While Mexico and its history of dictatorship and plunder is indirectly to blame, and there are many Mexican opinion leaders that openly advocate anti-American revisionism through immigration, it is ultimately the American political and business class that is comfortable with the present outcome of immigration.

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Overall, this author also perceived a sense of discomfort by the U.S. political class with ordinary Americans, whom they do not seem, as a class, to appreciate. One could not help but notice a desire by the congressmen to change the "chemistry" of America.

However, by logic, immigration will likely have consequences that may differ from what at least one of these groups had in mind. Take, for example, the anti-étatist Left, whose argument will be critically explored here more at length since, of the four groups discussed, they seemed to be the most assertive and "messianic" toward increased immigration. As was mentioned, they are vigilant against any one group becoming too powerful or unaccountable vis-à-vis other groups in society, and believe that immigration is one tool to achieve their goal. If indeed this group is correct, these activists have done the non-white population of the United States a favor. However, a holocaust (or at least serious repression) can also happen in an atomized, disoriented multicultural society. There are historical examples (less present in the immediate American debate) to suggest that a tyranny can be built on a multi-ethnic society. In addition, there are also examples on how homogeneity and even nationalism helped the advent and consolidation of democracy and tolerance.

The most obvious example of the first group is the Soviet Union. Lenin himself was a mixture of Kalmyk, Russian, and German; Stalin was Georgian; the father of the Red Army, Trotsky, was Jewish; the father of the KGB, Feliks Dzerzhinsky was Polish, etc. Perhaps Russia's ethnic diversity was a factor that permitted the Bolsheviks to dominate an atomized and weak civil society and consolidate their power so thoroughly. All this diversity ushered in a tyranny that in practice resembled that of the Nazis.

Scholars who follow the failure of post-colonial democratization in Africa cite the divide-and-conquer tactics pursued by would-be tyrants on their diverse and multiethnic citizenry. Those with dictatorial ambitions, such as Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, benefited from ethnic conflict as a way of perpetuating

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their power and permanence.[19] Even in Canada, the official move toward multiculturalism in the 1960s (away from the traditional bi-culturalism) and accompanying mass immigration coincided with an increase in the federal government's power. After all, diversity needs to be managed.

The same can be said of the post-communist transitions in Eastern Europe, where democracy flourished most where there was a homogenous population with a high sense of national identity. The successes included the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland; the relative failures included multi-ethnic Yugoslavia, Ukraine, Moldova, and Belarus, which has a weak national identity. Authoritarian leaders, their police forces, and their bureaucracies thrived in the latter category of countries.

On the other hand, the nationalism in the tiny Baltic republics that began to manifest itself in 1987 is credited with the demise of the USSR and the successful consolidation of their statehood. A bit further north, "national unity" was credited as the first step in Sweden's democratization beginning in the late 1800s. "It simply means that the vast majority of citizens in a democracy-to-be must have no doubt or mental reservations as to which political community they belong to."[20] The scholar argued that in order for the leaders to freely change, the people must remain the same.

Nationalism, then, despite its bad reputation, seems to be like cholesterol: there is both "good" and "bad." The "good" nationalism can be a catalyst for democracy and a guarantee of its permanence. One can even argue that "good" nationalism displaces the "bad" one. Whereas indeed some of the most "civilized" and literate European nations, as mentioned earlier, supported Hitler's designs, there were also Britain, Denmark, the United States, Australia, and other "civilized" nations using nationalism to resist and eventually defeat him. Even Stalin was forced to use Russian nationalism to rally the country against the German invasion. Less literate nations also allied themselves with Hitler for various reasons, including the Romanians plus important contingencies of Georgian and Ukrainian nationalists. In other words, nationalism is a more complex issue than the anti-étatist Left in the United States may have in mind.

Divided Society, Stronger State. The anti-étatist Left seems to believe that de-vertebrizing U.S. society is the same as castrating the state. However, the state may derive strength from an ethnically divided society. Locke argued that only through the act of observing the law can a society achieve freedom. He would perhaps agree

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that the more the U.S. has a sub-class of citizens from a culture that flaunts the law, the more coercive powers the state will be called upon to utilize to bring order. This could lead to a milder version of Russia's predicament — an oscillation between anarchy and repression.

We may ask if the anti-étatist Left has thoroughly considered the consequences of its campaign. Would "heterogenizing" the United States — in essence making another Brazil out of it — in order to reduce the likelihood of a Holocaust there be considered more than just a gamble? If indeed it can be proven that it works, then perhaps America's immigration policy can have certain benefits in that regard. Seen another way, would tinkering with the traditional pillars that gave America its character perhaps pose a greater danger for any of its minorities? Or, would the preservation of America's values, heritage and way of life likely be a bigger guarantee against any mass civil disturbance or even, in the extreme, genocidal pretensions by a future political entrepreneur?

In the end, however, all four of these groups may be mistaken. Mexican and other Latin American immigrants may in the end act like other immigrants before them and become Jeffersonian yeomen themselves. Though the studies that indicate there is indeed a higher level of tolerance for corruption by Mexican society are the most often cited, Mexicans also score moderately high in some values which are the building blocks of democracy and prosperity.[21] Or, immigration may have consequences that none of these groups (or anyone else for that matter) could today foresee.

In order to settle this issue, a dedicated and neutral scholar needs to study predominantly Hispanic cities in the United States, such as El Paso, the way Robert Putnam studied southern Italy. Whereas residents of El Paso tend to vote for only one party and their government is generally thought of as more corrupt and inefficient than those in other American cities, it is a marked contrast from Juárez next door, which is supposedly one of Mexico's best-administered cities. In other words, there is evidence of assimilation to American values.

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In addition, in the American system, it is not so much the "average" that counts but the statistical outliers. If the person that invents the cure against cancer turns out to be Mexican-American, she might be seen as justifying all the remaining Mexicans in the United States, legal or illegal, skilled or unskilled, since the United States is perhaps the only country that can launch such a talented individual.

Conclusion

In my view, immigration is positive for the United States, but it has to be accepted by the American population to be sustainable. It was certainly gratifying to find so much support among U.S. congressmen for amnesty for illegal immigrants and even increased immigration. But immigration has to be sold to the American people, not adopted through covert and machiavellian methods, since eventually this will provoke a backlash against the immigrants and potential immigrants the United States needs. It would indeed be a pity if immigration, with all it has contributed, were in the end more a result of unfounded fears, political ambitions, residual guilt, or skewed economic incentives than of the needs of the United States. As the American political elites have pursued their immigration policy with means verging on the extra-constitutional, it would not be surprising if radical opponents of immigration sooner or later also mobilize using extra-legal tactics, as has happened in some European countries.

Immigration is the one area where those seeking to weaken the state and those seeking to strengthen it agree, but for different reasons. In a way, these opposing ideological forces feed off one another with immigration. Take the issue of the perceived increase in crime from immigrants. The étatist Left reacts by pushing for increased social programs, the étatist Right for greater powers to the police, the anti-étatist Left for more gun control, and the anti-étatist Right for more gun permits for self-defense. But none in the end seek to restrict immigration, since they all seem to believe it furthers their cause and their mission.

Immigration, to paraphrase von Clausewicz, is politics by other means.

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Endnotes

[1] The main source of these studies is Harvard economist George J. Borjas. See, for example, his *Friends or Strangers* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), and his "National Origin and the Skills of Immigrants in the Postwar Period," in Borjas and Richard B. Freeman, eds., *Immigration and the Work Force* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

[2] Roy Beck, "Overriding Elites," *National Review*, June 16, 1997, pp. 42-44. See also, Roy Beck and Steven Camarota's *Elite vs. Public Opinion: An Examination of Divergent Views on Immigration*. December 2002. Center for Immigration Studies at www.cis.org/articles/2002/back1402.html

[3] World Bank, *World Development Report 1996* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. viii.

[4] Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965).

[5] Jeremy Jennings and Anthony Kemp-Welch, *Intellectuals in Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 173.

[6] See Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *From Max Weber* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 196-244.

[7] This author was assigned to formulate the protest by the Fox campaign. See Dana Milbank and Mary Beth Sheridan, "Bush-Fox Friendship Serves Both," *The Washington Post*, 3 September 2001, p. A1.

[8] Sealtiel Alatriste, "¿De nuevo, el viejo PRI?" *Reforma*, May 28, 2000, p. 16A.

[9] Isabel Turrent, "Libertad y servidumbre voluntaria," *Reforma*, June 4, 2000, p. 24A.

[10] Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo attributed the difficulty in eradicating corruption to "our cultural traditions, certain practices [which] even from colonial times had to do with corruption." *Reforma*, July 4, 1997, p. A1.

[11] Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 115.

[12] Ibid., p. 179.

[13] William A. Galston, "Liberal Virtues," *American Political Science Review* 82 (1988), p. 1281. Quoted in Ibid., p. 87.

[14] Rasma Karklins and Brigita Zepa, "Political Participation in Latvia 1987-2001," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 32:4 (2001), p. 340.

[15] There was an awkward moment with one congressman who put forth this particular argument. When I then asked him "Which were the two largest ethnic groups in the U.S. on the eve of and during World War II?," he did not know the answer was "Germans and Italians."

[16] I had the honor to work closely with them in attempting to do the same in Russia. See Fredo Arias-King, "Attempts to Place the KGB under Civil Oversight and Control in Russia and Why They Failed," masters thesis, Harvard University, May 1998.

[17] See for example, statements made by presidential candidate Sen. Joseph Lieberman to a question posed on amnesty for illegal immigrants before a largely Hispanic audience in Albuquerque, September 4, 2003, which appeared on CNN.

[18] A study carried out by the Anti-Defamation League in New York City to study the level of anti-Semitism in the U.S., concluded that "Far more than others, those in the 'most anti-Semitic' category tended to *consider immigrants a burden*, to deem AIDS divine retribution for sexual sinning and to want women back in the kitchen." [emphasis added]. See Clyde Haberman, "Bias Wanes, Giving Jews Luxury to Look Inward," *New York Times*, November 24, 1998, p. A-27.

[19] Donald L. Horowitz, "Democracy in Divided Societies," *Journal of Democracy* 4:4 (October 1993), p. 26. See also his book *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

[20] Dankwart A. Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy," *Comparative Politics* 2:3 (April 1970), pp. 350-51. He continued that "Democracy is a system of temporary majorities. In order that rulers and policies may freely change, the boundaries must endure, the composition of the citizenry be continuous. As Ivor Jennings phrased it tersely, 'the people cannot decide until somebody decides who are the people.'"

[21] See, for example, the study by the Mexican branch of Transparency International cited in Daniel Lizárraga, "Minimizan mexicanos la corrupción, revelan," *Reforma*, May 31, 2001. See also Ronald Inglehart, "Culture and Democracy," in Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington, eds., *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), pp. 93-95.

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Backgrounder

Politics by Other Means

The "Why" of Immigration to the United States

By Fredo Arias-King

Most serious attempts to study immigration to the United States acknowledge that the results of the present immigration policy were, in effect, an accident — the product of a miscalculation by the authors of the 1965 Immigration Reform Act. Their disagreements tend to center on the *consequences* of immigration. However, despite the mounting evidence that these consequences may not be as positive as often argued, there has been a certain reluctance to limit immigration (or discuss the issue frankly), and even a campaign by several groups to maintain it as such or even increase it. Another paradox is that immigration continues to be popular with practically all the ideological and political elites of the United States. At the same time, however, there is perhaps no other issue that represents a larger divide between ordinary Americans (who largely oppose current immigration levels) and their political elites. This paper attempts to address this paradox through the prism of my discussions with about 50 United States legislators on the issue of immigration.

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